

MR. WILLARD IN A NEW PLAY.

"THE CARDINAL" PLEASES, BUT IS OF WELL-WORN STUFF.

The Old Situation of the Priest Who Will Not Be Persuaded to Reveal Secrets of the Confessional Defiantly Handled—The English Actor Seen at His Best.

That popular English actor, Mr. Willard, began his winter engagement at the Garden Theatre last night in an interesting, picturesque play by Louis N. Parker, called "The Cardinal." Written for Mr. Willard and composed of familiar and effective material, the piece cannot fail to please the old dramatic crowd—the priest who will not reveal the secrets of the confessional, though his rascal spells misery for himself—has been deftly employed by the well-known English playwright.

Briefly, Mr. Willard enacts the role of Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, who calls himself "a Medici, and the humblest of God's creatures." From such churchly humility we know that intrigue, fast and furious, is bound to follow. And follow soon it does. His brother Giuliano is in love with Filiberta, born Chiapi. But an outlaw, Andrea Strazi, also loves her. The girl's father is murdered by Strazi, who confesses to the Cardinal and receives absolution. It is to be foreseen that the Cardinal's brother is blamed and actually condemned to death for another's crime, while the Prince of the Church is doomed to silence by his priestly oath.

To the happy angling of this evil mesh of circumstance the dramatist brings to bear all his skill. He tells his story leisurely and the speed of the first two acts is rather slow. Mr. Parker's plot is a Browningian flavor. He loves Virgil, rare statuary, gems and Mother Church. He is ambitious, would wear the triple tiara of Julius II. He is ready to win his way to a better world. And, doubtless, when age overtakes him, he will, like Browning's Bishop, order his tomb with the picked Latin and choice epithets. An epicurean exiles the tie, this particular as to the name of his in his salad dressing and fully alive to good vintage.

Mr. Willard, with his smooth, gentle air, indicated carefully the moods of this delicate Cardinal, his pride, his fraternal love. Clad in scarlet, he made the part of a priest of high degree. Urbanity is his note until the life of his brother is threatened, then the humanity in him awakes and also the craft of the Medici. He devises a way out of the danger that menaces his family, and ends as it should end.

It is hardly necessary to add that Mr. Willard was successful in his assumption, or that he was warmly received. He is an actor of sound judgment and wide experience at every point of the play—a new asset to this city.

At Willard's starting company is an excellent one. Maude Flavel played a lovely damsel of the sixteenth century very prettily. Mrs. Bassett, the hot-tempered Strazi, Robert Burnham, A. S. Homewood, J. J. Bartlett, H. Barfoot, J. G. Taylor, H. Case and others were well cast. The production was a satisfactory scene. There was present an audience goodly in size and cordially appreciative.

BENEFIT FOR GEORGIA CAYAN.

She is at the End of Her Resources—All Theatre Folks Anxious to Help.

Georgia Cayan, the actress, for many years the leading lady of the Lyceum Theatre, who is now in a sanitarium at Flushing, has come to the end of her resources. Her stay at the sanitarium is indefinite, and her savings have all been used in the expense of maintaining her. This fact has just come to light, and the managers of this city purpose to get up a testimonial in her behalf. At Hayman, Charles Frohman, K. H. Egan, Frank McKee, Frank Sanger, Charles Burnham and Daniel Frohman are organizing a benefit to take place at the Knickerbocker Theatre on the second Tuesday of January.

The arrangements for the benefit and its details are in the hands of Daniel Frohman. A money performance will be given. There is no profession who has aided various charities more with her talents than Miss Cayan. She appeared at every benefit given in New York at the Actors' Fund in this city in the last twelve or thirteen years, until she was stricken down by her present illness.

At Hayman, Charles Frohman, Daniel Frohman, Maude Adams and Klaw & Erlanger have already contributed \$20 each, for a total of \$400. Mr. Egan has graphed \$100 for a gallery seat and offered his services at the benefit. The bill is expected to include all the prominent attractions playing at the time of the event, and it is hoped that a sum will thus doubtless be secured which will place the actress beyond need for the rest of her days.

DR. NELSON MADE ARCHDEACON.

He was Bishop Potter's Secretary—Succeds the Venerable Dr. Tiffany.

Bishop Potter's private secretary, Dr. George Francis Nelson, was made an archdeacon yesterday at the annual meeting of the cathedral of New York, in place of the late Dr. Charles C. Tiffany, resigned owing to ill health.

Dr. Nelson is one of the best-known Episcopal clergymen in this city, by reason of the offices he has long held in the diocese. He is also a veteran of the Civil War, when at Yale in his junior year, he gave up his college course to enter the Union Army. He served through the war, attaining the rank of First Lieutenant, and afterward joined the Regular Army. He served for a long time as secretary to the commissary department at Nashville, and afterward as secretary to Gen. Phil Sheridan at the latter's headquarters in Chicago. He subsequently decided to give up a military career and went to Philadelphia, where he studied for holy orders and was ordained.

The trustees, except Charles P. Ball, whose duties as archdeacon were not relinquished, Charles J. Norris takes Mr. Ball's place.

Trinity parish was thanked for the gift of \$3000 for church extension in the suburbs.

DRANK POISON FOR BEER.

Leyh Complained of the Bitter Taste of the Fluid and Died.

George E. Leyh, a truckman, of 73 Broadway, Williamsburg, died yesterday from the effects of an irritant poison, which he mistook for lager beer. He was a widower, 73 years old, and every afternoon his daughter Isabel prepared his luncheon in a room back of his store. She did this yesterday and before Mr. Leyh sat down to eat he took a glass of beer. At the table he drank some of the contents of the bottle and complained of a bitter taste.

Presently he fell forward and became insensible. Dr. George E. Leyh, Jr., a son, and Dr. J. A. McLeod, a physician, were summoned. Mr. Leyh died without regaining consciousness.

Coroner's inquest. West will make an autopsy in order to determine the cause of death. A chemical analysis of the liquid remaining in the bottle will also be made.

The family say that it is possible that Mr. Leyh put a chemical preparation used in his business in a beer bottle and the bottle became mixed up with the others containing beer.

Police Commissioner Partridge III, yesterday Commissioner Partridge was confined to his office yesterday with a serious cold and Deputy Commissioner Ebelstein took his place acting commissioner. Col. Partridge is expected to be at his office to-day.

THE OLD RELIABLE.

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MR. WETZLER AND BRAHMS.

THE FORMER CONDUCTS THE LATTER'S MUSIC.

And to Do Him Justice He Does It Very Well—It Was the Fourth Symphony—Raoul Pugno Executes Schumann's Piano Concerto With Approval.

The second of Herman Hans Wetzler's series of symphony concerts took place last night at Carnegie Hall. There was a large audience and the applause was exceedingly friendly. Inclination seemed to outweigh judgment at times, and little critical discrimination was exhibited. Mr. Wetzler had wisely accepted the lesson of his first entertainment and shortened his programme, so that the concert was over soon after 10 o'clock. The compositions performed were the fourth symphony of Brahms, Schumann's piano concerto, and the overture to "Der Freischütz." The pianist was Raoul Pugno. Two of the numbers have not been heard recently. Brahms's fourth symphony was last played by the Philharmonic Society under Emil Paur on Nov. 17, 1899, and Schumann's piano concerto has not been heard since Ossip Gabrilowitch played it with the Boston Symphony Orchestra on Dec. 13, 1900.

Brahms's E minor symphony ought to be heard much more frequently than it is, but for some reason conductors appear to be afraid of the public attitude toward it. All sorts of nonsense has been written about it. We have been warned against the cold and sexless nature of the key of E minor, and told, moreover, a moonlight groening lead to passion and closed to soul. Yet some of that sort of comment has been solemnly offered. Dvorak has written his gorgeously colored, swimmingly melodious, rapturously sensuous "From the New World" symphony, and all the time there stood Chopin's E minor concerto, which can hardly be called ravishing music.

In all probability the feature of this composition which most confuses the public mind is the truly Brahmsian employment of old ecclesiastical modes alternately with what Moritz Hauptmann calls the "major-minor" scale which is, after all, nothing but an approximation from Hungarian music. It is the astonishing series of effects in cross relations, making harmonies of the weirdest kind, that offends the ears of those who hunger always for their diatonic sugar. Brahms actually in the second movement uses a melody in the old Phrygian mode—E minor without the sharp—against an accompaniment in the "major-minor" mode, which has the G sharp. The war between G sharp and G natural is a bitter one and sensitive hearers of the Beethoven period are wont to turn often in their seats while it is going on.

The variations of the last movement on a passageway theme do not deepen the joy of the effect. The theme is a simple one—given out by the wind in simple enough and apparently forbidding no trouble. The variations, too, begin to roar and snarl as sucking doves, but with the sublimity of the serpent, Brahms almost peacefully made them more and more polyphonic and polychromatic till, crowding the ears of the hearer who dwells in the past allusions hope of finding any sense theme which he can grasp and understand himself.

But the elixir of this glorious maze of variations they saw peeping the faces of old Bach, the founder of modern counterpoint, and Beethoven, father of all symphonic variations. It was music such as this that caused Wagner to write in "Mezozo-Tone in Modern Music."

"Those who do not care for Brahms—let them choose their own diet. There are, however, some of us who prefer his music to other composers' fat. The light that beats about his throne is a triple ray at times, but it is at least white. The time comes to all when the chromatic comes to make thrill, and line, not color, seems the more beautiful."

He must be a callous soul, indeed, who can sit untouched by the beauty of the second movement of this symphony, while the joyous, vigorous, and cheerful melody to rouse the spirit of a festival. The composition was excellently performed last night.

Mr. Wetzler deserves praise again for his insistence upon the letter of the score. The notes were played as written, and every slur, every staccato mark, every direction as to tempo, was followed to the letter. But there was something more than that. The music was well read, and there was an emotional warmth in the same conductor's recent reading of Beethoven's fifth symphony.

Mr. Pugno's article opinion of the Schumann concerto was welcomed as a gospel of romantic music, and the audience shook the rattle with the upheaval of its delight. The excellent reading of the concerto was a masterpiece of playing something faster than any one else. Nothing is so easy as to astonish people by snatching a myriad of notes in a minute, but it bears the same relation to noble piano playing that emitting a high C does to beautiful singing.

Mr. Pugno played the first movement of the concerto very well, though memory of our effort recalled more than one interpretation which had been heard. With the second movement began the descent to A minor. The pianist seemed to be in a mood of the most perfect calm, and his playing was a tempo which amazed his hearers, but which crushed the diamond of the composer's imagination into glittering dust. It was brilliant, but it was not Schumann. Mr. Pugno has done better things. Let us hope that he will do them again.

The Wetzler overture was performed well by the orchestra. Mr. Wetzler's reading was in accord with the traditions. He buried matters a little toward the close, but the effect was not bad, and it made the concert that much shorter.

FRANCIS ROGERS'S RECITAL.

An Afternoon of Song in Mendelssohn Hall.

Francis Rogers, baritone, came forward about once every season with a song recital. His annual appearance was made yesterday afternoon at Mendelssohn Hall. There was an unusually large and smart audience, for Mr. Rogers is popular not only with those who know the difference between singing and not singing, but also with those who like to be found in the frequent places and knowing company, singing and not singing. It is "the thing" to go and hear Mr. Rogers. Curiously enough, he deserves it. In musical art it is the rule that "the thing" is cheap and empty, or else that its position has been won only by long and steadfast fighting against the fearful odds of fashion.

Mr. Rogers has been popular since he came here from Boston. He accomplishes a great deal with rather slender means. His voice is a soft, sweet organ, but it is neither large in volume nor in timbre. It is the sort of voice which would quickly weary the hearer were it not used with skill and sympathy.

He has learned a good deal about a much abused art. He uses his voice with judgment and with observation of good law. He is especially happy in the production of charming effects of color and gradation by means of his head tones.

Aided to his technical equipment Mr. Rogers has innate refinement and sensibility, together with a cultivated taste. He knows different styles of singing, and employs them properly. He endeavors to recreate for the hearer the atmosphere of each song and he fails only with those to which the character of his voice is not particularly adapted. His programme yesterday

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This recital affords a demonstration of the Pianola. Unless you have adequate reasons to feel sure that you know what can be done with the Pianola, we urge your attention at this recital or a visit to our warehouses at your early convenience.

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